

What help is available?

Low vision aids and services

People with varying degrees of vision loss continue to lead independent lives with the support of low vision services and visual aids. Technology is rapidly improving to benefit people with low vision.

For more detailed information,
a free information kit and
magnetised Amsler grid, or
to donate, contact the
Macular Disease Foundation Australia.

1800 111 709

www.mdfoundation.com.au

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447 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

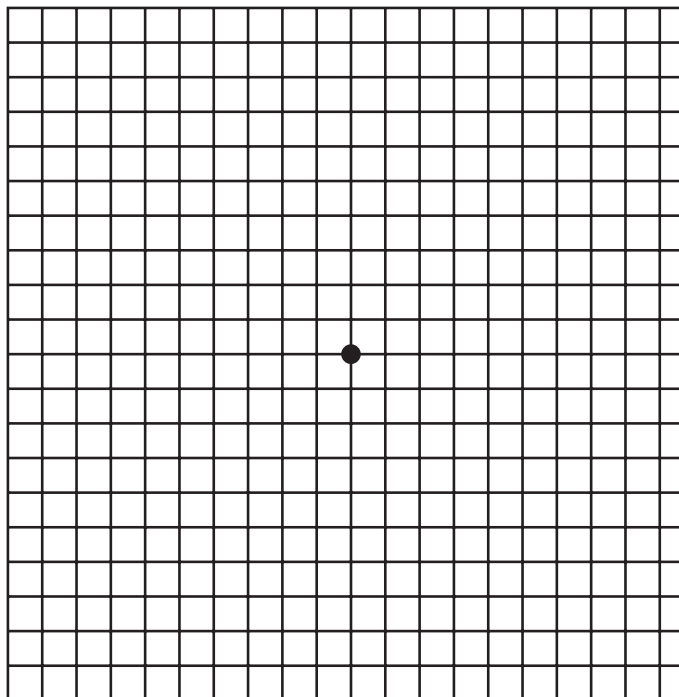
* Legal blindness.

** Any changes in diet or lifestyle should be undertaken in consultation with your doctor.

1. 'Eyes on the future - A clear outlook on age-related macular degeneration'. Report by Deloitte Access Economics & Macular Degeneration Foundation, 2011. 2014 projections are a linear projection between 2010 and 2015 estimates.

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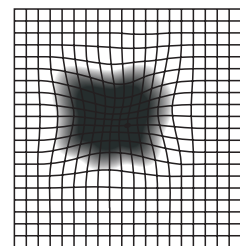
Amsler Grid



The Amsler grid is used to test for and monitor symptoms of macular degeneration. It should not be depended upon for diagnosis.

Instructions:

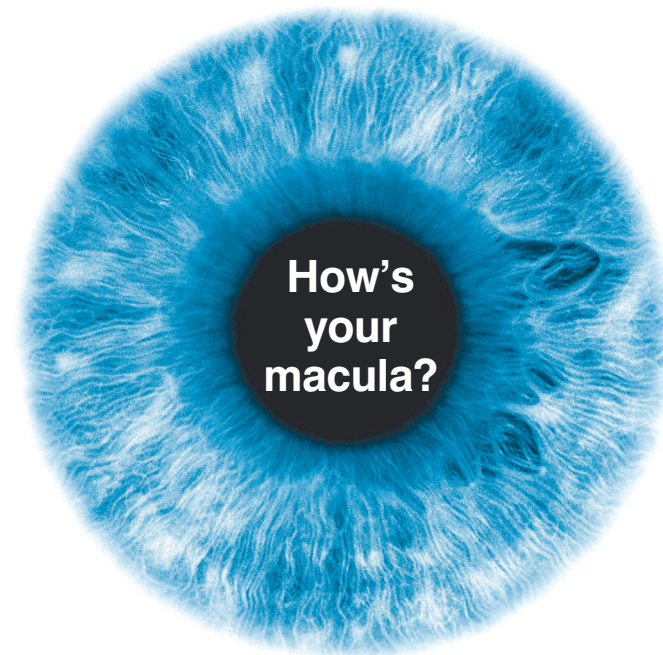
1. Do not remove glasses or contact lenses normally used for reading
2. Hold grid at eye level approximately 33cm away in a well lit room
3. Cover one eye and focus on the centre dot with the uncovered eye (make sure the eye is fully covered)
4. Repeat with the other eye



If the grid lines are wavy, broken or distorted, or if there are blurred or missing patches, this may be a symptom of macular degeneration.

Macular Degeneration

Australia's leading cause of blindness*



Our focus is your vision

1800 111 709

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Macular Degeneration

What is macular degeneration?

The macula is the central part of the retina, the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. The retina processes all visual images. It is responsible for your ability to read, recognise faces, drive and see colours clearly. You are reading this brochure using your macula. Macular degeneration causes progressive macular damage resulting in loss of central vision but the peripheral vision is not affected.

How common is macular degeneration?

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness* and major vision loss in Australia.¹ One in seven Australians over the age of 50 years (1.15 million people) has some evidence of the disease and the incidence increases with age.¹

What are the types of macular degeneration?

There are two types. The **dry** form results in a gradual loss of central vision. The **wet** form is characterised by a sudden loss of vision and is caused by abnormal blood vessels growing under the retina. Immediate medical treatment is essential if symptoms occur.

What are the risk factors?

Age: The risk increases significantly with age.

Family history: There is a 50 per cent risk if a direct family history is present.

Smoking: There is three to four times the risk if you smoke.

Eye health checklist**

- Have an eye test and make sure the macula is checked.
- Don't smoke.
- Keep a healthy lifestyle, control weight and exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Eat fish two to three times a week, dark green leafy vegetables and fresh fruit daily, and a handful of nuts a week. Choose low glycemic index carbohydrates. Limit the intake of fats.
- In consultation with a doctor, consider a suitable supplement.
- Provide adequate protection for your eyes from sunlight exposure, including when young.

What treatments are available for macular degeneration?

Treatment options are dependent on the stage and type of the disease. Current treatments aim to keep the best vision for as long as possible and in some cases may potentially provide visual improvement, but there is presently no cure. Early detection is vital in saving sight.



How some people with macular degeneration might see the world.

Key symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Difficulty with reading or any other activity that requires fine vision.
- Distortion, where straight lines appear wavy or bent.
- Distinguishing faces becomes a problem.
- Dark patches or empty spaces appear in the centre of your vision.

The need for increased illumination, sensitivity to glare, decreased night vision and poor colour sensitivity may also indicate that there is something wrong. If you experience any of these symptoms contact your eye care professional immediately.

Early detection is vital

The early detection of any form of macular degeneration is crucial to save sight. Difficulty with your vision should not be dismissed as just a part of 'getting older'. In its early stages macular degeneration may not be noticed but it can be detected in an eye test before any visual symptoms occur. Early detection can allow you to take steps to slow its progression and save sight.

